

THE BIBLE

Under the Microscope

BY THE LATE DR. J. C. BEAL

People today say that we need a new Bible, but it is not a new Bible that we need; it is a new faith in the old Bible.

In this article I hope to show some of the hidden beauties of the Bible that are not seen on the surface of the Book. Let us in our imagination take a pleasure trip in the spring-time when all nature is bursting into beauty. We take a flower and examine its petals, stamens, stalk, and note the very beauty of the entire flower, and as far as the eye can see this flower is really perfect. It bears the marks of the omnipotent Creator and seems to be a message of love from God, telling of His wisdom and care for the least of His creatures. This little flower teaches us of His power as shown in the hidden details of nature, as well as the larger things—not only in the mighty ocean but also in the blade of grass. But under the microscope I see perfections that were hidden from the eye. The more I increase the strength of the microscope, the more hidden beauty I see.

The story is told of a Scotch botanist who one day was lying on the ground examining a bluebell under his mighty microscope. A shadow fell over his shoulder and he looked up into the face of an old shepherd, who was greatly mystified at what the botanist was doing. The botanist adjusted the microscope so that the shepherd could look through it and let him see the little flower through it. A few moments passed without a word being spoken, and on looking up, the botanist saw tears trickling down the shepherd's cheeks. "Do you not find it beautiful?" asked the botanist. "Beautiful? Beautiful? Yes; more than that. The thing that brings tears to my eyes is that I have trodden under foot so many of these beauties of God's creation."

The beauty was only revealed as the microscope was applied. This is always true and is an un failing test to distinguish between the works of God and those of man. You may take the mainspring of a watch—the fin-

est watch made—and yet under a microscope you will see its imperfections. Look at the point of a needle; to the natural eye it looks perfect, but under a microscope the end will look like a blunt spike. Look at the finest piece of polished stone ever made and it will seem perfect, but under the microscope it will look like a pitted slab. And so we see that all that is not directly from the hand of the Creator loses its beauty and fineness under the microscope.

We will now look at the Bible under the microscope and see if it bears evidence of coming from the hand of God or from the hand of man. Turn to Genesis 5 and you will find the list of Abraham's ancestors. We will put this record under the microscope. We find Methuselah, the man who lived the longest of any man who ever lived—969 years. The question comes: Were these years the same as our years today? Some folk would have us to believe that these were lunar years instead of solar years, but I want to remind you that if that is true it must be applied throughout the Scriptures. They doubt the idea of a man living 900 years and yet would have you believe that one king had children born to him at the age of five years. I would rather believe the Bible than to make myself believe that this is possible. (Compare book entitled, "Did Moses Know?") Of course they were years! The sun, moon, and stars mark off time.

Hebrew names always had meaning. For example: Abram, when called into definite relationship with God, was given a letter out of His name (Jehovah), making it Abraham and changing the meaning entirely. The outstanding illustration of this, however, was with Jacob (the deceiver), who later had his name changed to Israel (the prince ruled by God).

Now what is the meaning of Methuselah? Hebrew scholars say it means "when he is dead, it will be sent." Enoch, a prophet and a man who walked with God, was responsible for naming this man. Here we shall apply the microscope to find

THOUGH DEAD, HE SPEAKETH

In forthcoming issues of the Missionary Herald articles written by the late Dr. J. C. Beal will appear. Dr. Beal went to be with the Lord January 30, 1944, after having served the Lord in the Brethren Church for many years. He served pastorates at Sunnyside, Wash., Los Angeles, Calif., Spokane, Wash., Canton, Ohio, Fillmore, Calif., and Waterloo, Iowa, and was engaged in Bible conference work at the time the Lord called him home.—Ed.

the purpose of this name. In Genesis 5:25 it says that Methuselah lived 187 years and begat Lamech. In verses 28-29 it says that Lamech lived 182 years and begat Noah. Now 187 plus 182 equals 369—therefore Methuselah must have been 369 years old when Noah was born. If Methuselah lived 969 years and he was 369 years old when Noah was born, he must have lived until the 600th year of Noah's life.

If we turn to Genesis 7:11-12, we will discover what took place in the 600th year of Noah's life and you will have in mind the purpose of Enoch's naming a name that meant "when he is dead, it will be sent." Methuselah died in the 600th year of Noah and the flood came that same year; therefore when he named Methuselah, Enoch the prophet had in mind the coming of the flood. When we dig down deep into the Word and use the microscope, we find absolute harmony in that which comes from the hand of God. This one thing then tells me very definitely who is the author of the Bible.

Why did Methuselah live so long? According to the promise of God, as given in the meaning of his name, the world was safe as long as he lived, no matter how sinful the world might become. Those who know the record know that such crime, sin, and corruption came that God had to wipe out of existence all men and animal life, with the exception of Noah and his family and the animals he was told to take with him into the ark. The people were so bad that they did not have God in their thought any more; yet as long as Methuselah lived the people were just as safe as the promises of God are sure. God, unwilling to execute judgment, lengthened his life. Finally God permitted judgment to come and the first dark chapter relative to the race of man ended. In Ezekiel 18:31 we find God saying: "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" God was just as unwilling to execute judgment on the antediluvians as He was on the house of Israel.

In the sixth chapter of Genesis in the closing verses we read that God commanded Noah to take just a *pair* of each of the animals on the land (note that no mention is made of any of the water creatures, so those who would say that it would have been impossible to destroy fish, etc., with a flood have no such ground for criticism). You will read that Noah did exactly what God told him to do.

In the seventh chapter God told Noah to take *seven pairs* of certain animals and again it says that Noah did as God commanded him. This is usually considered a ground for criticism. On the surface this appears to be a discrepancy, but under the microscope we find one of the most beautiful things we have in connection with the story of the flood.

It is necessary for us to have in mind the meaning of the names of Deity in order to understand this record. There are seven names of Deity, four of which are found in the Book of Genesis. In the story of the flood we are concerned with only two of these names: Elohim, who is a God of love and places himself under covenant relationship to do certain things and swears with an oath to do this very thing; and Jehovah, the One who loves righteousness, hates iniquity, must punish the sinner. The basis for fellowship with Him is sacrifice.

In Isaiah 45:18 we learn that the earth was created for inhabitation, and so when God created the earth He placed himself under obligation to people the earth. Keeping in mind the meaning of these two names, you will find the beauty of the microscopic application. In the sixth chapter it is Elohim speaking. He is under obligation to people the earth. How many does it take to perpetuate the species? *One pair*. Life can be maintained by just one pair, and so when Elohim speaks, He tells Noah to take into the ark one pair of each animal.

In the seventh chapter it is the LORD (Jehovah) speaking—remember the meaning of His name. Now either one of three things: Noah had to remain out of fellowship with God, or the animal life must be obliterated in the use of some of the animals for sacrifice, or Jehovah must somehow provide the sacrifice. When He gave this order to Noah relative to the sacrifices, He told him to take seven pairs of each of certain animals. First, He was under obligation to perpetuate the species, but

God must also provide the sacrifice for Noah after the flood or certain lines of animal life would have been extinguished. How beautiful are the hidden things of the Word of God!

Now notice that Noah built an altar immediately after the flood and offered sacrifices. If the LORD had not provided the sacrifice, Noah would have had to remain out of fellowship with God, or a certain line of animal life would have been extinct.

The sweet-smelling savor means that this sacrifice was acceptable in God's sight; it was so because God had provided the sacrifice himself. Here is another beautiful picture of hidden beauty. It is also a type of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. The man who takes Jesus Christ as his substitute has the right to expect that that will be satisfactory to God himself. When I accepted Christ, then God accepted me.

Some critics would tell us that the ark was not the type of vessel that would have been essential to go through such a flood, but one of the best shipbuilders in the world made a statement in a paper to the effect that "the ark was the masterpiece of all vessels ever built, for the purpose for which it was built. No engineer has ever made a better vessel." He also said that the ark was the best-proportioned vessel ever built for its purpose.

Some say that there could not have been a universal flood because there would not be enough water to cover the earth and destroy all things. But a learned scientist says that if the entire earth were leveled, the waters would cover the entire earth in a two-mile depth, and surely that is enough to drown all things.

Again they say that had there been a flood, there would be records everywhere regarding it, but that Asia Minor seems to be the only place where really vivid records seem to prevail. There are records found over the entire world, in all races and nations, as to some kind of a flood which happened at that time.

The ark rested on Mount Ararat (or Armenia) (Gen. 8:4) on the 17th day of the seventh month. At first sight this means nothing, but no man would have dared to guess the date because tradition was carried from mouth to mouth and history thus became established. Man would hardly have guessed correctly the very day and month that the Lord Jesus

Christ was to be raised from the dead! As Noah began a new race of people physically after the Flood, so the Lord Jesus Christ began a new race spiritually after His resurrection. Do you think that man could have guessed that date and have it harmonize in type as we have it here?

How do I know it is the same day and month? In the first part of chapter 12 of Exodus it reads: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months." From that time the Jewish calendar was changed and the seventh month of the old Jewish calendar became the first month of the new one. The first month of the Jewish calendar is Tishri and the seventh month Abib (April), but if you will compare Exodus 13:4, you will find it very definitely stated that the day they left Egyptian bondage was the month of Abib. Now if you remember, it was during the month Abib that the Lord Jesus was crucified. In Exodus on the 10th day of the month a lamb was to be taken and kept until the 14th day and then slain. That lamb is the type of the Lamb of God (John 1:29).

If you know anything about the crucifixion, you know that Jesus was crucified on the 14th day of the seventh month of the old Jewish calendar—the first month of the new—the same day as the lamb in Exodus; therefore a perfect fulfillment of the type. He stayed in the grave three days and three nights as He said He would (there is no foundation for the observance of Good Friday), and He arose the 17th day. Here we see something that is hidden under the surface, but it is a perfect picture of the resurrection. Did some man guess this thousands of years ago? No! I Peter 1:21 tells us that the Holy Spirit moved men in the writing of the Bible, and since He was the Author of the Book, there can be no mistakes in it.

There were two thieves, one on either side of Christ. It was necessary for the Romans to furnish or provide a grave for these bodies. Many times the grave was at the foot of the cross. So we see that they did plan to make His grave with the wicked, but a secret disciple (up until this time) came forth and claimed the body of Jesus (Mark 15:43). This man was Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, and he had Jesus buried in his tomb. He did make His grave with the wicked and the rich. What a beautiful fulfillment of prophecy!